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HARTWELL WALKING TOUR STOPS

Brief History: City of Hartwell

In May 1854, the Judges of the Inferior Court purchased 100 acres of land in what is now Hartwell and laid the property off into streets, squares, and lots. Officially incorporated as a city by the Georgia legislature on February 26, 1856, Hartwell is the county seat of Hart County. The city was named for Nancy Hart, a local heroine of the Revolutionary War who served as spy and captured a group of Tories who threatened her home.

The 1860 census listed a total population of 235 inhabitants with real estate valued at \$54,000.00. Hartwell's economic base was rooted in agriculture, primarily cotton. During the 1860s, the city suffered with the rest of the South through the terrible years of the War Between the States. Slow but definite growth began with the completion of the railroad in the 1870s. By 1900, Hartwell boasted a population of 1,672, with 20 telephones and 50 automobiles.

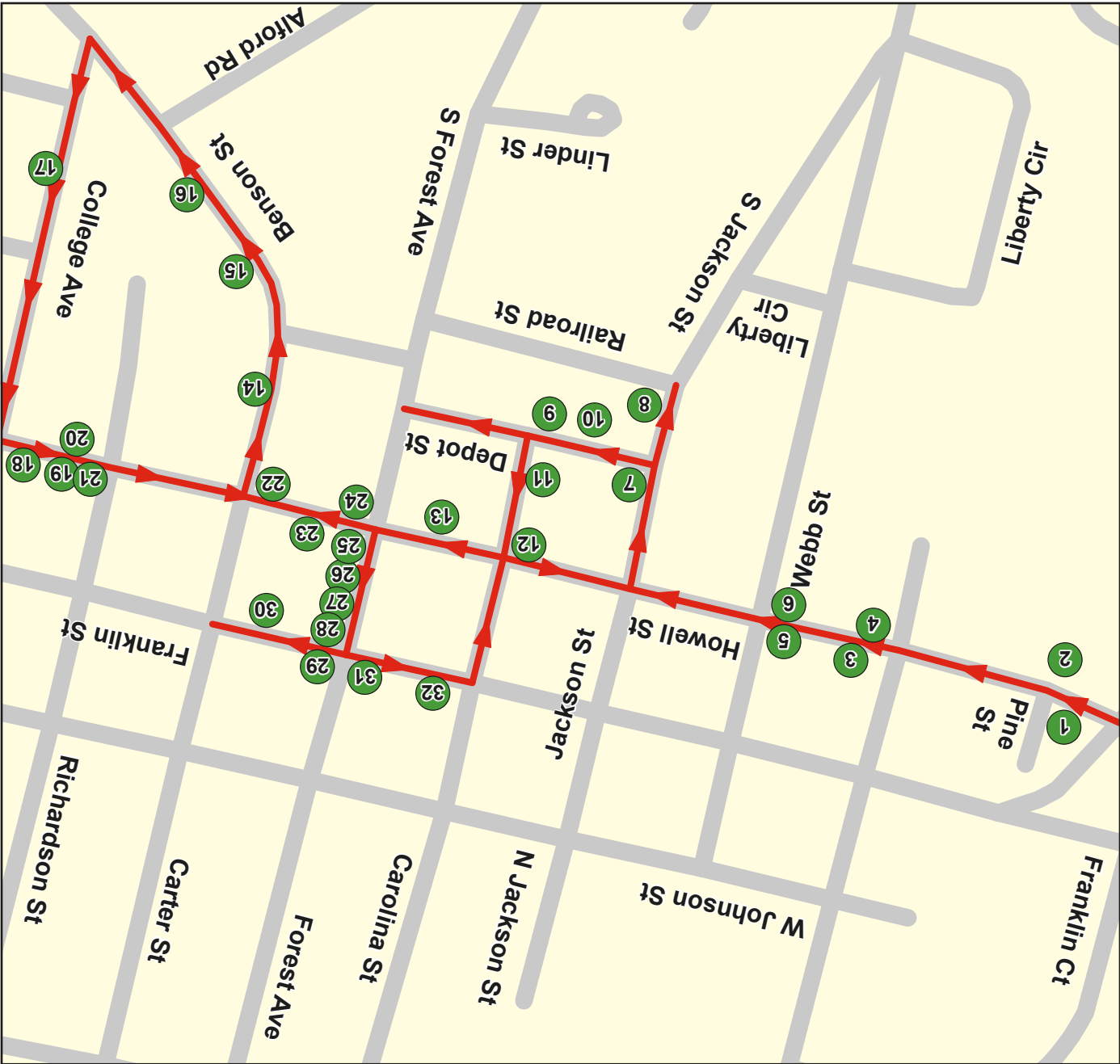
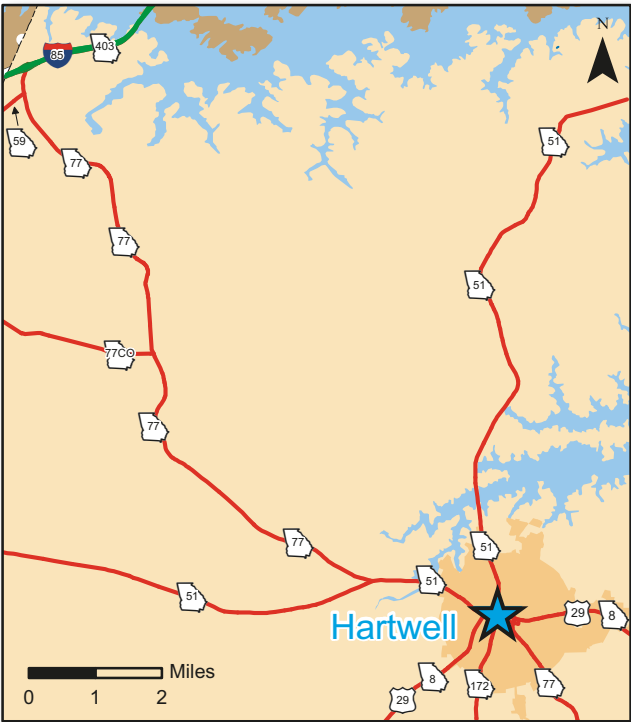
Hartwell's population had grown to 2,323 by 1920 and city leaders invested in infrastructure, installing water and sewer lines in the city to support industrial growth. When Bankhead Highway (U.S. Hwy 29) was completed in the mid 1920s, Hartwell became an important overnight stop on the way to and from Florida. Unfortunately, the arrival of the boll weevil devastated the cotton industry and resulted in a sharp economic decline that, exacerbated by the Great Depression, lasted until the late 1930s and caused a slow exodus of population.

The post-World War II prosperity of the 1950s ushered in a period of immense growth for Hartwell. The city's population nearly doubled between 1950 and 1960. Industry continued to expand with local textile and apparel plants and the decade-long construction of the Hartwell Dam. With the completion of the dam project and creation of Lake Hartwell in 1963, a new era of growth began for the city and county.

With increasing emphasis on the arts, historic preservation, and a balanced economic mix of agriculture, industry, and tourism, the City of Hartwell continues to thrive. We are proud that Hartwell has been an accredited Georgia Department of Community Affairs Main Street City since 1997. While visiting our community, we invite you to experience our southern hospitality while enjoying downtown shopping and antiquing opportunities, cultural arts, great golf, boating and fishing on Lake Hartwell, and food fixed right.

PARTNERS

- Hart County Historical Society & Museum
- John Benson Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution
- <http://johnbenson.georgiastatedar.org>
- Hart County Archway Partnership
- <http://archwaypartnership.uga.edu/>
- Hart County Library
- www.hartcountylibrary.com
- Hart EMC Foundation
- www.hartemc.com
- Hartwell Downtown Development Authority
- www.hartwellmainstreet.com/
- Hartwell Historic Preservation Commission
- <http://hartwell-ga.info/>
- Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
- www.gmrc.ga.gov



1



Teasley-Holland House

Built by Isham Asbury Teasley in 1883, a large landowner in Hartwell and Hart County. It was later given to Mary Holland, who lived in the home with her brother. It is Victorian-eclectic style and features a porch with square columns, a bay window on the front façade, and octagon-shaped vents. Currently houses the Hart County Historical Society and Museum and offices for the Hart County Chamber of Commerce. 31 East Howell Street

2



Thomas William Teasley House

Mr. Teasley was a lawyer, private banker, planter, and operated a general store, the T.W. Teasley Co., on the square in downtown Hartwell. Teasley served as mayor of Hartwell from 1898-1900. It is a highly detailed Victorian-eclectic cottage with a brick root cellar and an open well shed on the property. 30 East Howell Street

3



Kidd-Bailey House

This property was originally the site of a frame school house used by early Hartwell Methodists as a meeting place prior to the construction of the Methodist Church in 1897. Built in 1896 for Mr. Charles I. Kidd, a prominent Hartwell citizen and leading businessman who came to Hartwell in 1881 and owned a livery business with his brother. A fine example of Queen Anne style architecture, it was built on lot # 113 of the original Hartwell city plan. Look closely above the front steps to see a Masonic emblem carved into the gingerbread trim. 137 East Howell Street.

4



Isham Hailey House

This yellow brick house was home to pharmacist Isham Hailey, who owned Hailey's Drug Store with his brother Henry. The home currently serves as local offices for the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. 130 East Howell Street

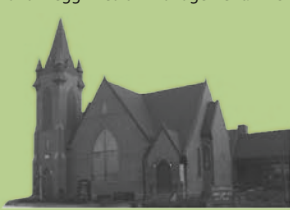
5



Ira "Doc" Adams House

Mr. Ira Adams was an active member of the First Baptist Church and worked at Kidd Chevrolet Dealership in Hartwell. This blue Victorian house with orange and white trim is currently used for offices for Savannah River Productions, a regional theater production company, and Bradford & Legg Wealth Management. 173 East Howell Street

6



Hartwell First United Methodist Church

Prior to this building's construction, members met on this lot in a frame structure which was the first church building in Hartwell prior to the Civil War. The use of the building was extended to the First Baptist Church, whose members met there until constructing their own building. The Methodist church was the first building in town other than the Hartwell Mill to have electricity. It is an example of Gothic Revival style and features beautiful windows made of Tiffany glass, executed by W.R. Orr Company of Atlanta. The bell, which tolls in the tone of A flat, was purchased in 1891 and weighs 1,050 lbs. The church was placed on the National Register in 1987. 31 East Howell Street

7



The Corner

On this site originally stood a gristmill, which later became Dickerson's Livery Stable. J.D. Dickerson was a blacksmith, mule and horse trader and farrier, and distributor of wagons, buggies, harnesses, and other equipment. The original livery was replaced in 1909 with this brick structure. It is on the National Register. 120 Depot Street.

8



Hartwell Train Depot

The depot was used by the Hartwell Railway. Note the train schedule sign and the waiting platform adjacent to the depot, complete with lights. The station is the terminus of a 10-mile rail line, completed in 1879, from Hartwell to Bowersville. In Bowersville, it connects with the rail line that runs between Toccoa and Elberton.

9



Depot Street

The buildings that back up to the train depot were originally warehouses. Hart County farmers brought wagonloads of cotton to town, lining up their bales down the middle of Depot Street to be weighed and loaded onto the train.

Buildings on Depot Street include(d):

- Foothills Outfitters (formerly Leard & Massey, a home and garden dry goods store; the left side was the Ford dealership garage)
- Hartwell Umbrella Company (formerly the Rural Electrification Administration and later the Southern Umbrella Company)
- Depot Designs (formerly a freezer locker)

10



Hart County Community Theatre

Originally built as a grain warehouse and later home to Weatherly Furniture Company, HCCCT bought it in 1983 and began renovating. The Theatre was awarded the Space Award for the renovation efforts in large part because of the preservation of the building's historic integrity and the unique volunteerism and community support surrounding the project. Note the stained glass windows featuring comedy and tragedy masks. 83 Depot Street

11



Cleveland Ford Dealership and Service

This big glass window front was originally home to Bradberry's Garage, which repaired buggies and carriages. It later became Heaton Ford Dealership and Service before becoming Cleveland's. The service garage extended behind the showroom storefront and the garage doors opened on Depot Street, in what is now part of Foothills Outfitters. Carolina Street

12



Hailey's Corner

The small white building to the left of Hailey's was the original Hartwell Post Office. The Post Office moved to the opposite side of the square when the current building was constructed in the 1930s. The original Hailey's building was constructed around 1920 from yellow brick, in a Neoclassical Minimalist style. It contained Hailey's Drug Store, owned by brothers Isham & Henry, and a barber shop. The drug store's soda fountain was a popular hangout. During WWII, the building served as the Greyhound Bus Stop and bore witness to the departure and return of many of the area's servicemen. Local women made cookies and sandwiches to sell to departing soldiers. The original building burned in 2001 and the new Hailey Building is an excellent example of new construction restoring a site to its original appearance. The building serves as offices. 308 East Howell Street

13



Howell Street

This side of the courthouse square offered several mercantile businesses where shoppers could buy groceries, pharmacy/drugs, clothing, fabric, and other items. Above the storefronts were professional offices for doctors, dentists, and attorneys. Today, you will see a mix of businesses, including the Hart Regional Arts Council and Bailes-Cobb, a third-generation family-owned store established in 1929.

14



Hartwell First Presbyterian Church

The building is typical of the plain style of Presbyterian Church buildings of the late 1800s and has been updated. 41 South Carter Street

15



The Skelton House

Originally built for Hartwell attorney Jim Skelton, his wife Jessie, and their 10 children. This elegant Victorian home is still owned by the Skelton family. Completely remodeled in 1997, it is now a bed & breakfast. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. 97 Benson Street

16



McCurry-Hodges House

This house that faces the Hart County Library is one of the oldest in Hartwell and was the home of Asbury and Fannie McCurry. He was a prominent attorney, and she was the daughter of John B. Benson. Their daughter, Eloise, married Judge Walter Hodges. After his death, she served on former Georgia Governor Ellis Arnold's advisory board and as postmistress of the Capitol in Atlanta during the week, but on the weekends, she returned to her Hartwell home. 159 Benson Street

17



Hartwell Elementary School

There were originally 2 school buildings built to serve the elementary and high school students of Hartwell. Hartwell High School had a fire and was demolished, but Hartwell Elementary remains. The elementary school gymnasium was a project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which put people back to work during the Great Depression. The main building and gymnasium are listed on the National Register. 147 South College Avenue

18



W. L. "Willie" Brown House

This brick home was the residence of Mr. W.L. Brown, who owned a Pontiac dealership in downtown Hartwell. 565 East Howell Street

19



Gus Skelton House

Mr. Skelton was an early insurance agent in Hartwell and an active and prominent community member. The Skelton-Morris Agency is the oldest insurance firm in the community and continues to serve the area. 545 East Howell Street

20



Inman Alford House

Mr. Inman Alford was a leading local retailer who owned a dry goods mercantile located in the building that is currently home to the Hart Regional Arts Council. His wife, Emma Alford, was an elementary school teacher who was instrumental in establishing the first school band. This white frame home currently serves as offices for a local attorney. 532 East Howell Street

21



Women's Club House

The brick Club House was built in the 1930s during the Depression as a project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and serves as a community center. 529 East Howell Street.

22



John B. Benson House

Mr. John Benson was a founder of the community. He opened the first dry goods store in Hartwell in 1854, served as the first postmaster, and at one time owned the Hartwell Sun with his son. He served as a state senator during the Civil War. 440 East Howell Street

23



Gordon Law Firm

This building was originally built as the Hartwell REO Company, a garage and motor car showroom for the REO automobile. In the photo, the truck shown is the REO Speedwagon, which was Hartwell's first motorized fire truck. The REO automobile was designed by R.E. Olds, but unfortunately was not successful. However, Olds came back with a second more successful car design - the Oldsmobile. This building has had many incarnations over the years, and when it was remodeled in 1976 as a law practice, it became the first (and still the only) building in town with a full-size indoor tree and garden. 415 East Howell Street

24



24 Bowers Flooring

This building was originally W.L. "Willie" Brown's Pontiac dealership and showroom, with a drive-through for automobile service. Later, it served as Citizens Banking Co. Today, it is a locally owned flooring company. 7 South Forest Avenue

25



Carter Law Office

This building was originally The Hartwell Bank and later Homer Herdon's Drug Store, which operated from the early 1930s until the early 1960s. At one time, the Hart County Library was located on the second floor. The building exhibits characteristics of the Richardson Romanesque style with its arched window, first story treatment, and turret. Today it is home to the law offices of a local attorney. 4 North Forest Avenue

26



Hang it Up Gallery and Studios

This was the former location of Vickery Hardware, owned by Mr. Isham Vickery. Mr. Vickery's son, Maurice, used to decorate the storefront window for the holidays using various seeds sold in the store. Maurice later served as Fire Chief of the Hartwell Fire Department. It currently serves as a gallery and studio, showcasing art from both local and regional artists. 30 North Forest Avenue

27



Your Hart's Desire

Formerly The Emily Theater, owned by Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Yarbrough, and named after their daughter. The Yarbroughs owned another theater on the current site of CVS Drugs called The Judy, as well as a drive-in theater on Hwy 29 South called The Joy. Go inside and view the Gone with the Wind mural at the back of the store, painted on the old movie screen. Later, the building was home to Poole's Department Store. 36 North Forest Avenue

28



Restoration House

Offices for Georgia Power and the Hart Telephone Company were located in the building. Telephone switchboard operators worked upstairs. The building also previously housed Walters Department Store. 50 North Forest Avenue

29



Old Coca-Cola Bottling

This structure has had multiple uses through the years. It was originally built as a livery stable and buggy works where horse-drawn carriages were constructed. Next, it housed a Buick dealership, then became a Coca-Cola bottling plant, and later, a Western Auto store. Today it houses a restaurant. 126 West Franklin Street

30



Old Police Station

In front of the old Coca-Cola bottling plant, look back across Franklin Street to your left. Above the second story of this building, you will see a Police Station sign painted in black and a small bell tower. This building previously housed the Hartwell Police Station and the City Fire Department. 95 West Franklin Street

31



Shoppe on the Square

This building with the Something Old Something New mural was formerly the Gallant Belk department store. The second story was the first location of the Hartwell Garment Company, the first sewing plant in Hartwell. The Hartwell Garment Company was owned by the Bell Family. The plant later moved to a building on Howell Street just behind the Hailey Building. Today, this building is an antiques shop. 150 West Franklin Street

32



U.S. Post Office

Above the doors, you will notice three marble reliefs featuring various forms of transportation. Go inside and look on the wall to your left. The mural is a Depression-era (1939) Works Progress Administration (WPA) commissioned mural by Orlin Clayton titled "The Letter." The WPA employed over 4 million artists, musicians, and actors in artistic projects, such as painting murals in public places, across the United States. 184 West Franklin Street

You have now reached the end of your downtown Hartwell historic walking tour. We hope you have enjoyed your stroll through the history of our community and hope you will come back often to visit. To return to the Visitor's Center at the Teasley-Holland House/ Chamber of Commerce, where you began your tour, turn left onto Carolina Street. Continue one block on Carolina Street and take a right onto Howell Street. Retrace your steps down Howell Street back to the Visitor's Center.